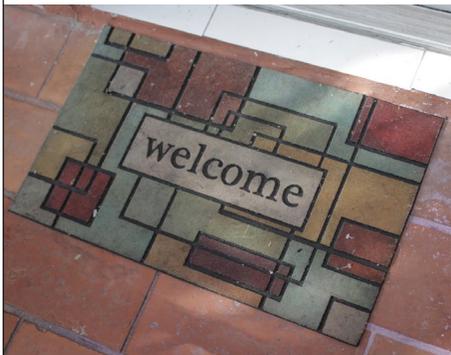


How can resettlement agencies assist landlords in overcoming challenges?

Resettlement agencies have dedicated casework staff with the linguistic and cultural competencies required to work effectively with refugee populations. Culturally appropriate housing orientation is part of the standard reception process new arrivals undergo, and translation, cultural mediation and other forms of assistance can help prevent miscommunication or clear up any issues that do arise. Constructive relationships with landlords are essential for the success of refugee families, so our local partners go the extra mile to cultivate and preserve those relationships.



To learn more about renting to refugees, and to get more detailed information about working with these new Americans in your community, contact our partner agency in your community today!

LEASING TO REFUGEES –

Answers to Common Landlord Questions



Refugees are defined by the twin traumas of persecution and flight. The central characteristic that differentiates refugees from other migrants is the experience of fleeing home to seek refuge in a neighboring country.

A small number of the world's refugees, once displaced, find a new beginning through resettlement to the United States, with newcomers arriving in communities around the country throughout the year.

Not surprisingly, among the first concerns for these displaced individuals after resettling is a driving need for a safe and stable place to finally call home.

Once established, refugees quickly achieve self-sufficiency and make tremendous contributions to their communities and local economies, with the continuous support of resettlement agencies—like those in the Episcopal Migration Ministries network—and other friends in their new communities.

A clean, affordable and safe apartment is an essential building block to a hopeful new future, and positive, pro-active communication with landlords and property managers is an important part of that equation.



COMMON QUESTIONS

How do refugees come to the United States, and how did they get to my community?

There are millions of people living as refugees around the world, forced from their countries by violence and persecution. They live in a state of extended limbo in camps and other temporary situations awaiting a chance to safely return home.

A small number of these individuals—less than one percent—will apply for a visa to resettle in the United States when no other positive options remain. Even fewer will receive a visa. Refugees are vetted thoroughly by multiple federal agencies, including the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security, and come to the U.S. with the help of a designated resettlement agency.

This process is carefully coordinated, and placements are made in consultation with local, state and federal agencies, with consideration of many variables, including the availability of safe, affordable housing.

“Over the last year, we have rented several homes with the assistance of Lutheran Social Services (EMM’s local partner) to refugee families in transition. The experience has been overwhelmingly positive. Not only have we been able to provide quality housing to families in need, but the families that LSS has placed have been courteous, respectful, and often remain in the home provided after becoming independent.”

Bethany Reed, Property Manager,
Urban Pharm, Grand Rapids, MI



“We realized that, (refugees) are people who need homes, and we can help them out. It’s the mix of ideas and the work ethic of people who have come from other places that make our country great.”

Julio Puzzuoli, Owner, Lexington Village Apartments, Madison Heights, MI

What assistance do refugees receive to make sure they can pay their rent?

Refugees receive an initial support grant of at least \$925 per person upon arrival in the U.S. and are eligible for additional special cash assistance for up to eight months. In addition, resettlement agencies provide intensive language and employment training, plus job placement services, to help newcomers quickly become self-sufficient.

What rights and privileges do refugees have when they arrive?

Refugees have the legal right to live and work in the U.S. as residents as soon as they clear customs at the airport upon arrival. Within weeks of arrival, they will receive a social security card. After one year, these new Americans are eligible to apply for legal permanent residency—commonly called a green card—and full U.S. citizenship after five years in the country.



How can leasing to refugees benefit property managers?

Admittedly, landlords must be willing to work within the unique circumstances that refugee tenants entail, but doing so can produce great benefits for all involved. Most refugees come from family-oriented cultures that value integrity and hard work. Once they get their feet on the ground in a new community, landlords frequently report that refugees make excellent tenants and neighbors. Just as importantly, landlords have the opportunity to make a tremendous difference in the lives of refugee families at a critical juncture.

“We love that we can help those people to adjust to a new reality and society, language and everything else. As an immigrant myself, I can relate to what they’re going through.”

Elijah Dyskin, landlord in Chattanooga, TN

What special circumstances come with renting to refugees?

Being accommodating with documentation helps ensure that refugees have safe, stable housing upon arrival to the U.S. Because they often come from distant countries and have had their lives interrupted by persecution and flight, many refugees arrive to the U.S. without supportive documentation, such as credit reports and employment histories. In addition, flexibility with security deposits can be tremendously helpful.

